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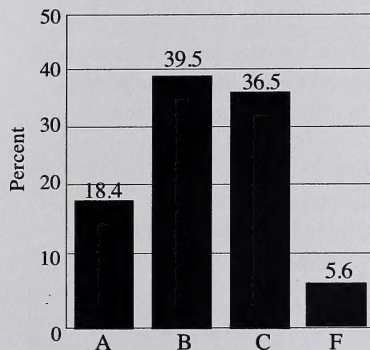
Social Studies 30

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1994

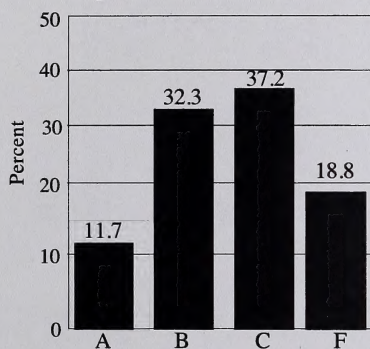
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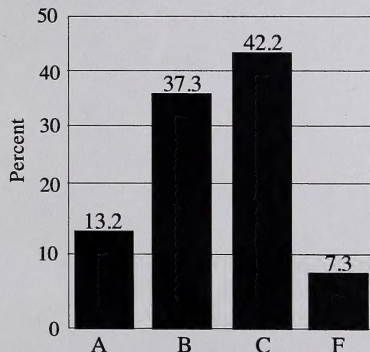
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the January 1994 administration of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a multiple-choice section worth 70% and a written-response section worth 30% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 8 925 students who wrote the January 1994 examination.

- 92.7% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 13.2% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Overall, student achievement in Social Studies 30 was satisfactory. Students demonstrated a good grasp of Social Studies knowledge. In composing their essays, many students were able to express a clear understanding of the issue under discussion and were more aware of how to develop and organize an argumentative paper. With the addition of a discretionary half hour of writing time, students must focus more on planning, editing, and proofreading their written work.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 67.2%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 62.3%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 65.1%.

Part A: Multiple Choice

Examination Blueprint

Part A: Multiple Choice has a value of 70 marks, one mark for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area (topic) being tested and according to the knowledge and skill objectives required to answer the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1994 according to these classifications.

All questions on the diploma examination require students to demonstrate knowledge of social studies content and to apply social studies skills to that knowledge base. The reporting categories below define the general types of questions that appear on the examination and the categories for which information is reported.

		Question Classification by Topic		Total Questions
		Topic A: Political and Economic Systems	Topic B: Global Interaction in the 20th Century	
		Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the world's political and economic systems as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the interaction of nations since 1918 as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	
Question Classification by Knowledge and Skill Objectives	Comprehension of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of generalizations, key concepts, and facts related to social studies content.	1, 2, 3, 9, 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 30, 32, 33	36, 37, 42, 51, 52, 56, 57, 62, 63, 67, 68, 69	24
	Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge of social studies content by interpreting and analysing information and ideas.	5, 6, 8, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 29, 31, 35	38, 39, 41, 44, 46, 48, 49, 53, 54, 61, 65	23
	Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of social studies content by synthesizing information and ideas and evaluating their accuracy and worth.	4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 21, 24, 28, 34	40, 43, 45, 47, 50, 55, 58, 59, 60, 64, 66, 70	23
	Total Questions	35	35	70

Results

Results are reported in average raw scores. Total Part A: 45.9 out of 70. Subtest results for Part A:*

by Topic

- Political and Economic Systems: 23.6 out of 35
- Global Interaction in the 20th Century: 22.2 out of 35

by Knowledge and Skill Objectives

- Comprehension of Information and Ideas: 16.4 out of 24
- Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas: 15.0 out of 23
- Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas: 14.5 out of 23

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school results.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	C	90.8
2	B	78.8
3	C	73.7
4	D	66.9
5	A	70.9
6	A	51.1
7	D	72.3
8	D	77.8
9	B	62.4
10	C	70.1
11	D	61.9
12	C	89.1
13	B	51.4
14	D	57.8
15	D	84.9
16	A	84.5
17	C	36.0
18	B	54.8
19	A	50.0
20	D	77.0
21	A	74.2
22	B	67.8
23	A	57.0
24	C	48.7
25	A	71.4
26	D	80.8
27	C	86.2
28	C	76.5
29	A	90.9
30	D	52.3
31	A	58.2
32	B	71.2
33	A	48.8
34	D	52.3
35	C	64.1
36	B	83.9
37	B	66.1
38	C	45.1
39	C	81.7
40	A	47.5
41	B	54.2
42	B	77.5
43	C	53.7
44	B	68.7
45	D	50.1
46	A	60.2
47	C	48.9
48	C	55.4
49	B	63.6
50	B	54.5
51	D	48.5
52	C	57.3
53	A	69.1
54	B	59.7
55	C	73.6
56	D	70.9
57	B	85.3
58	A	77.5
59	B	54.5
60	C	71.5
61	D	71.4
62	A	84.4
63	D	68.4
64	A	50.6
65	A	36.0
66	D	80.9
67	D	45.4
68	B	61.8
69	D	61.2
70	D	83.4

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results with provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examiners' Comments

The multiple-choice section of the examination requires students to go beyond simply recalling information and to apply their knowledge and thinking skills. Students must demonstrate that they understand social studies concepts; that they comprehend historical, political, and economic relationships; and that they can interpret and evaluate social studies information and ideas.

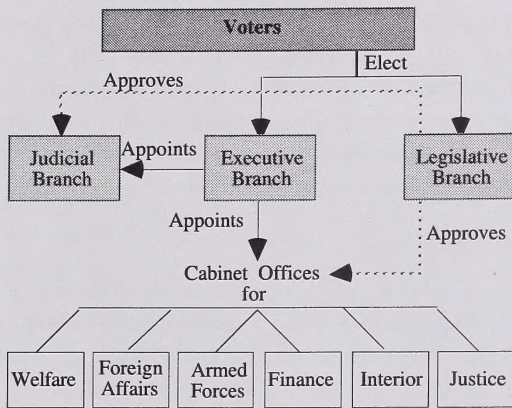
During the marking session, a committee of six classroom teachers of Social Studies 30 reviewed Part A to determine whether the standards embedded in the multiple-choice questions were appropriate and fair. The committee members generally concurred that this section of the examination set an appropriately demanding standard of achievement for graduating Social Studies 30 students. They found the data sources relevant and engaging and the questions challenging but fair.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering

Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

The following table gives results for five questions selected from the examination. The table shows the percentage of students in three groups answering each question correctly. The comments on pages 4 and 5 discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Student Group	Question Number				
	17	30	39	40	66
All students	36.0	52.3	81.7	47.5	80.9
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	59.0	78.7	96.2	77.5	96.4
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received marks between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination.	31.4	46.5	79.6	39.9	80.1



17. Choose the correct title for the system depicted in the diagram.

- A. Italy's corporate state
- B. Britain's constitutional monarchy
- C. America's presidential government
- D. Canada's parliamentary government

Question 17 was one of two questions based on a diagram illustrating the basic framework of the American political system. The question is classified in the blueprint as a Synthesis/Evaluation question on Topic A. To answer correctly, students had to recognize certain key and unique features of the American system of checks and balances. Many students either did not know or failed to detect the significance of crucial details such as the legislative approval of judicial and cabinet office appointments. As a result, many students found question 17 difficult: only 36% of all students (59% of those achieving the standard of excellence) answered correctly.

The fact that 58.5% of all students concluded that the diagram represented Canada's parliamentary system suggests that many students may be unsure or confused about the differences between various democratic systems.

30. Canada's adoption of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms has had the effect of

- A. further increasing political patronage
- B. limiting the role of the Supreme Court
- C. guaranteeing the power of majority rule
- D. broadening the power of judicial interpretation

Students found **question 30** somewhat difficult, with only 52.3% of all students answering correctly. However, 78.7% of those achieving the standard of excellence answered correctly. The question tested students' ability to recognize an important consequence arising from the introduction of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is classified in the blueprint as a Comprehension question on Topic A. Those students answering correctly demonstrated an encouraging ability to discern a subtle and sophisticated conceptual relationship.

Use the following cartoon to answer questions 39 to 41.



—from A Cartoon History of U.S. Foreign Policy

39. This cartoon from the 1930s is ridiculing
- A. Spain's reliance on foreign intervention
 - B. Ethiopia's loss of independence
 - C. Britain's policy of appeasement
 - D. Italy's demands for peace
40. At the time the cartoon was published, who would have disagreed with the cartoonist's bias?
- A. A fascist sympathizer
 - B. An opponent of totalitarianism
 - C. A fighter for Spanish democracy
 - D. A supporter of Ethiopian sovereignty

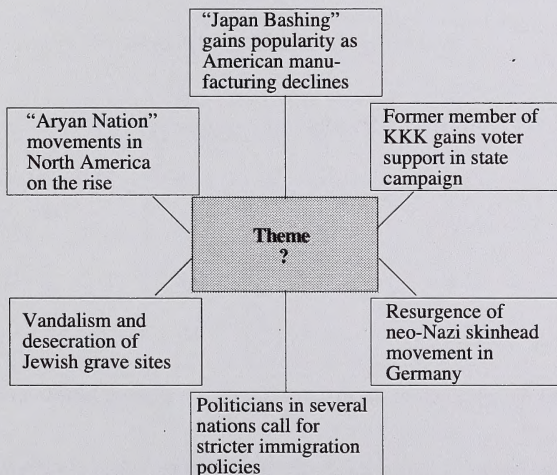
Questions 39 and 40 required students to interpret the main point being made by an historical cartoon and to evaluate the cartoon from a certain perspective as being biased. Question 39 is classified as Interpretation/Analysis and question 40 as Synthesis/Evaluation, both for Topic B. To answer correctly, students had to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking skills by recognizing various cues within a context both humorous and laden with meaning. They also had to apply their knowledge of certain key historical events and personages from the interwar period.

The fact that 82% of students were able to choose the correct response for question 39 suggests that they were able to recall without difficulty Great Britain's response to various acts of fascist aggression and to recognize the cartoonist's critical reaction to it. Or did they?

Interestingly, many of these same students found question 40 to be difficult: only 47.7% answered correctly. The fact that 29.5% of students who achieved between 50% and 64% concluded that an opponent of totalitarianism would have disagreed with the intent of the cartoon suggests that many students may actually be confused about the meaning of the cartoon.

This result may indicate that many students are quick to form an association between "Chamberlain" and "appeasement" without giving much thought or understanding to the issues that underlie this period.

The difficulty level of question 40 may also be explained by looking at the type and level of thinking skills required for students to arrive at the correct answer. Only 47% of students were successful at detecting the cartoonist's bias in the historical context that the cartoon was published and then evaluating the point of view of various factions to discern who would have disagreed with that bias.



66. What theme would be appropriate to describe the developments shown in this diagram?
- A. Decline in the attraction to Marxist-Leninist ideologies
 - B. Growth of public apathy toward current political issues
 - C. Results of state-sponsored and -controlled indoctrination
 - D. Re-emergence of extreme reactionary political philosophies

Question 66 required students to synthesize a common theme from among a series of contemporary and rather alarming developments. The fact that most students (81%) were able to choose the correct response suggests that they were able to comprehend without difficulty the relationship among these developments and the conceptual significance and meaning of certain key social studies terms.

Part B: Written Response

The results for the written-response section of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination are tabulated according to the percentage of students achieving at each level (1 to 5) in each of the scoring categories. Each scoring category assesses somewhat different skills; consequently, individual student's scores are likely to vary from one category to another. Those students who achieve at or above the standard of excellence (80%) on the written-response section have scores of **(4) Proficient** or **(5) Excellent** for all scoring categories. Students just meeting the acceptable standard (50%) on the written-response section have scores of **(3) Satisfactory** for some scoring categories but produce **(2) Limited** work for others. Students who produce **(3) Satisfactory** work for all scoring categories receive scores of 18 out of 30 on Part B.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignment and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. The scoring guides that describe proficiency levels are in the *Diploma Examinations Program Bulletin Update, Social Studies 30, 1992–93 School Year*.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

The written-response section contributes 30% of the total examination mark. Students are required to write one complete and unified essay in which they discuss the importance and complexity of an issue and rationally defend their position by using supportive, relevant evidence. The organization of arguments should show evidence of logical thought that should persuade the reader. Students are expected to make use of their critical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate complex and independent thought.

Part B: Written Response has a total value of 30 marks: 10 marks each for *Defence of Position* and *Quality of Examples* and five marks each for *Exploration of the Issue* and *Quality of Language and Expression*. The average raw score mean for Part B was 16.3 out of 30. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores					
		(5) Excellent	(4) Proficient	(3) Satisfactory	(2) Limited	(1) Poor	Ins *
1. Exploration of the Issue	5	2.2	15.5	41.6	35.3	5.0	0.4
2. Defence of Position	10	1.8	15.0	43.5	35.4	3.9	0.4
3. Quality of Examples	10	1.7	11.5	35.2	39.8	11.3	0.4
4. Quality of Language and Expression	5	2.8	20.8	61.8	13.6	0.7	0.4

* **Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **(3) Satisfactory** level of performance.

Examiners' Comments

The results of the written component of the January 1994 examination showed a comparable average score to that achieved provincially in 1992 and 1993.

Topic A

Some individuals believe that governments should only implement economic policies and programs that have the support of public opinion. Other individuals believe that governments should implement economic policies and programs regardless of their popular appeal.

To what extent should governments allow public opinion to influence their implementation of economic policies and programs?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Topic B

Some individuals believe that the United Nations should intervene in civil wars and ethnic conflicts that occur within nations. Other individuals believe that the United Nations should not interfere in the internal disputes of any nation under any circumstances.

To what extent should the United Nations intervene in civil wars and ethnic conflicts?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Students' writing continues to show encouraging improvement. Many markers and those teachers involved in standards confirmation commented that more students are successfully embedding their understanding of an issue's complexity and importance into the text of their writing. These students recognized the need to present a perspective on an issue as a necessary basis for establishing and developing a position. Many students acknowledge the ambiguities associated with issues rather than presenting opposite points of view in a false dichotomy. Markers also remarked on the increasing numbers of students who are qualifying their positions on an issue, often in sophisticated directions, and exhibiting an obvious, genuine sensitivity to the issue under discussion. As well, many markers noted that students' responses to both essay questions revealed a generally sound recollection of specific Social Studies 30 course content, including a wide variety of supporting examples from contemporary events.

Despite these positive general observations, a number of concerns regarding student achievement emerged. Many students, as already noted, were able to recall without difficulty an array of historical and current events but had great difficulty relating this content to the issues presented. Thus, a common criticism of student work involves not so much the accuracy of their supportive evidence but rather its application and relevance to the discussion. A major barrier to many students achieving the standards associated with proficiency and excellence is their apparent inability to fit their examples to their arguments and ultimately to their position. The ability to achieve a purposeful link between examples and argumentation marks a significant cognitive advance over simply being able to recall details or even to identify examples that may be relevant.

To make this transition from recall of knowledge to critical thinking skills in their essay writing, students must be given opportunities to practice these skills in the classroom. Students may benefit specifically from instruction in rhetoric. Above all, teachers and students must be made aware that the diploma examination in social studies is not, in the final analysis, simply a test of knowledge and recall.

A further concern to many markers and those teachers involved in confirming standards related to the scoring category of *Quality of Language and Expression*. Far too many students continued to display difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and in using the

correct conventions of language. As one marker commented, "I can easily understand some spelling or punctuation errors when writing under examination pressure, but the errors in syntax seemed excessive." This is surprising, given the addition of a discretionary half hour of writing time. Did students take this additional time to edit and proofread their finished work carefully or to plan the structure of their essays more fully before beginning? Apparently not, in many instances. It was the opinion of many markers that many students may have used their additional time to review their answers to the multiple choice section of the examination. Students are well advised to focus more on planning and editing their written work with the additional time available to them.

It was apparent to many markers, including teachers who confirmed standards, that students dealing with Topic A frequently had difficulty identifying the key issue. Too often, they appeared to be distracted by the phrase "economic policies and programs" and rushed headlong into a discussion of various economic systems—often erroneously associating socialism strictly with dictatorship and capitalism strictly with democracy. Many of these students failed to relate their examples to the central question of the role of public opinion and thereby ignored the political dimension. This prompted one marker to suggest that the topic was particularly challenging because it broke the conceptual barrier between politics and economics. Thus, for those who tend to draw artificial boundaries between political and economic systems, the question was not easily "pigeonholed."

The major challenge facing students writing on Topic B was to identify relevant case studies and examples. Many markers, including the teachers who confirmed standards, noted that many students did not distinguish between the concept of civil war and ethnic conflict on the one hand and international conflict on the other, either because they did not know the difference or because they failed to read the issue statement carefully. As a result, inappropriate comparisons were made, for example between UN intervention in Somalia and that of the recent Gulf War.

Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to express an adequate understanding of the complexity and significance of an issue. These writers often recognized the principles underlying different viewpoints associated with an issue and generally established an historical or a contemporary frame of reference to an issue's importance; for example, on Topic A, that authoritarian regimes that failed to respond to public opinion often ended in failure. Students achieving the standard of excellence perceptively investigated the complexity and significance of the issue, often throughout the fabric of their response. Such students were comfortable in revealing to the reader what they genuinely thought, rather than attempting to write what they felt the reader wanted to hear.

As in the last administration, many students demonstrated an awareness that a stronger position paper is developed by establishing a basis for each argument or reason and then applying specific historical and contemporary examples as supportive evidence for each argument. In this respect, more students appear to be planning the structure of their essays through webbing and outlines. Students achieving the acceptable standard supported their position with several adequate arguments. Although these arguments lacked in elaboration and depth of understanding, they were connected to the issue under discussion and to the position taken. Supportive evidence used by these writers to bolster an argument was generally relevant, but not error free, and more often general rather than specific in presentation. Such writers, despite making minor errors, demonstrated control of conventions.

Students achieving below the acceptable standard did not link their examples in a meaningful way to their positions. They developed evidence primarily in descriptive terms, unloading as much data as they could recall and thus exhibiting little sense of its organization and applicability, as previously noted. Superficial descriptions of detail and the presentation of extraneous information resulted in lower scores. Students achieving below the satisfactory level demonstrated poor control of conventions.

Students achieving the standard of excellence composed powerful and forceful arguments that were firmly rooted in the application of germane, well-chosen evidence—evidence that in many instances supported a qualified position. Students at this level wrote carefully organized essays essentially free from errors in mechanics and grammar.

Overall, it was apparent that the demands of the January 1994 assignments were within the comprehension of most students.

For further information, contact Barry Jonas or Elana Scraba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 427-0010.